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ABSTRACT

There is now consensus among educators in Papua New Guinea that literacy efforts must be strengthened through closer bonding of literacy with information-that-matters. Papua New Guinea's Cabinet has recently endorsed a National Literacy and Awareness Program linking literacy projects with public awareness campaigns, hoping to increase support for literacy by coordinating existing projects and resources, thus reducing unnecessary duplication of costs. Literacy in less developed countries needs national policy but can piggy-back on global concerns over awareness issues for supplementary funding. (Appendixes include a description of the vernacular literacy program, program specifications and management structure for the literacy and awareness program, the Melanesian Accord, and a description of the Landowner Awareness Centre program.) (Author/RS)

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# Literacy Policy and Provision in Papua New Guinea

by
Micael Olsson

*There is now concensus among educators in Papua New Guinea that literacy efforts must be strengthened through closer bonding of literacy with information-that-matters. Papua New Guinea's Cabinet has recently endorsed a National Literacy and Awareness Program linking literacy projects with public awareness campaigns, hoping to increase support for literacy by coordinating existing projects and resources, thus reducing unnecessary duplication of costs. Literacy in LCDs needs national policy but can piggy-back on global concern over awareness issues for supplementary funding.*

## 1.0 BLENDING LITERACY WITH AWARENESS INFORMATION

An important feature of the literacy policy adopted this year by Papua New Guinea's Cabinet is that literacy and public awareness programs are deliberately woven together, a package of interest to both politicians and educators in less developed countries like Papua New Guinea.

It is probably easier to get political recognition of the need for awareness information than it is for adult literacy campaigns. This is because adult literacy is often seen as a longterm effort that requires considerable expenditure and is subject to numerous pitfalls, particularly in a country with three national languages and more than 800 local languages each with multiple dialects. That being the case, perhaps literacy could profit from closer links to critical awareness programs.

### 1.1 POLITICAL WILL

Now 15 years into its post independence period, Papua New Guinea has reached a stage where the rural majority is calling for greater participation in the development process and is beginning to hold politicians responsible for what is perceived as a slow rate of growth. This is particularly true as regards development around the large gold and cooper mines and the newly discovered petroleum deposits as well as near the vast forest and seabed resources. Landowners want information on the latest policy guidelines and they want to know what the implications of those policies are for them.

With politicians now experiencing a need to get this kind of information out to the rural landowners in order to maintain the support they need in their own constituencies, the role of such awareness information is gaining political currency. Law and order, national

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unity, substance abuse, land mobilisation, census and election procedures are other topics that have already triggered the allocation of resources to public awareness campaigns in Papua New Guinea.

## 1.2 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Obviously, support from Papua New Guinea's educators is an equally vital factor in nurturing a literacy policy through to Cabinet endorsement. The recent literacy policy initiative in Papua New Guinea has come at a time when the education sytem is under increasing attack for its lack of relevance to rural community life. Fewer than 20% of Papua New Guinean children complete primary school and only half of these find places in high school. Then there are jobs for only one out of ten of those who finally do complete high school. The resulting frustration and rising law and order problems have led to increased pressure on educators to create learning opportunities with more relevance for rural life for both in-school and out-of-school learners.

The new policy on literacy, when combined with awareness information, provides just that kind of opportunity. On its own, mother-tongue literacy reinforces local values and enhances cultural stability. But integration of an ongoing stream of development information gives the education system a much greater role in the whole development process in countries where 85% of the population lives in rural villages.

The result of such a mariage of literacy with awareness information is a win-win situation for both politicians and educators which, combined with external support for Interantional Literacy Year, provided Papua New Guinea with the appropriate climate for the endorsement of its national policy.

## 2.0 GRASS-ROOTS UP

Another factor contributing to the development of Papua New Guinea's national literacy policy has been its gradual evolution from the grass-roots up, essentially freeing it from the uphill battle for regional support that frequently plagues centrally initiated policies.

A policy of universal primary education in English came into affect following World War II, although missions and some NGOs have been conducting literacy programmes in a variety of vernacular languages as well as two lingua francas.

During the late 70s and 80s, however, as the opportunities for wage employment in the urban sector decreased, vernacular literacy programmes spread and school leavers happily took up roles as literacy instructors back home in rural villages.

At times, instruction would begin without adequate teacher training or attention to material preparation, raising fears that the motivation of first time learners could be permanently damaged. But local communities so wanted to participate that they persisted in organizing their own programs, regardless of whether there was any outside help or not.

Responding to these pressures, provincial governments began to adopt their own vernacular education programmes, beginning in 1980 with the North Solomons Tok Ples Schools. By 1983, the national government reacted with an adjustment to the Education

Act allowing for the use of languages other than English in non-core subjects.

Gradually the number of provincial governments formally adopting mother-tongue literacy schemes has increased and so has the infrastructure to support it within the national department. The former English Section of the Curriculum Development Division within the National Department of Education is now the Literacy and Languages Section supporting a major project servicing the development of mother-tongue literacy, both adult and pre-school (see Appendix A: Circular 37/88). Given the current political climate with more and more powers being passed to the provinces, this upward pressure from the grass-roots for increased mother-tongue learning opportunities can be expected to increase.

## 3.0 THE NATIONAL LITERACY AND AWARENESS PROGRAM

It is in this context, then, that the political endorsement of the new national policy on literacy has been realised. It's expression developed as part of a new resource management system of government for Papua New Guinea (see Appendix B: Introduction to the Programme Specification and Programme Design Documents). This system was introduced to ensure that program and project proposals stem directly from Government policy initiatives, while fully involving the administration in both the formulation and implementation of those policies.

### 3.1 LINK TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOALS

The process involves linking programs and projects to 32 national objectives drawn from the constitution, the key link for the literacy program being Objective 28 which is to help people understand the changes occurring around them, thereby improving their participation in the development process. The program seeks to use improved literacy skills and improved access to awareness information as the means of achieving this objective.

### 3.2 PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Since the literacy and awareness program affects more than one department, an interdepartmental structure was established with the National Department of Education assuming the lead role and the key supporting roles going to the National Information Service within the Department of the Prime Minister and to the Department of Home Affairs and Youth since their clientele is largely the youth, women's and church groups (see Appendix C: LAP Management Structure). Key government and nongovernment agencies involved in literacy and awareness activities make up the National Literacy and Awareness Council chaired by the lead agency. A small secretariat is charged with implementing the recommendations of the Council.

It is important to note here that the bulk of LAP Council activities are expected to be networking activities, i.e., there is no intention to set up a national infrastructure that staffs and funds adult or vernacular literacy on a national scale. Rather, the idea is to let everybody know what everybody else is doing. The hope is that this kind of coordination will:

a. help weaker programs learn from stronger ones

b. stimulate joint projects in terms of material production and teacher training

c. inspire some voluntary sharing of staff and resources where mutual interest develops

## 3.3 PROJECTS

For administration purposes, the activities of the National Literacy and Awareness Program (like all Resource Management System programs) have been grouped into a series of specific projects covering the compilation of useful database information and the coordination of both existing and new literacy activities.

The database information includes a directory of all active youth, women's and church groups nationwide along with an information bank of community project ideas, related training opportunities and possible sources of seed money.

The coordinating of existing programs concentrates on the organization of regional literacy training and production workshops arising from local requests to strengthen provincial programs in the North Solomons, East New Britain, Enga, Morobe, Oro and Milne Bay provinces. NGO supported programs such as the Southern Highlands Adult Tokples Schools, the Goroka YWCA Tok Pisin program and the church sponsored Kisim Save program have also been involved.

In contrast to the existing programs where awareness materials are primarily an add-on, the Secretariat is coordinating the development of a series of trial projects fully integrating literacy with locally relevant development information in selected areas such as those of the South Simbu and Kadrian Gloucester integrated rural development schemes.

## 3.4 THE MELANESIAN ACCORD

While PNG's Literacy and Awareness Program is still new, it attracted the attention of other education ministries in the region at the recent *Education for All* conference in Thailand with the result that a followup meeting of the Melanesian countries was held in Port Moresby in May of this year during which an accord on cooperation in the development of literacy and awareness programs was signed by the governments of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (see Appendix D: The Melanesian Accord).

# 4.0 PROGRAM FUNDING

As regards funding, the Resource Management System being developed in Papua New Guinea, is driven by the redirection of existing resources rather than the provision of additional funding. It is the rationalization of existing literacy and awareness activities across government and nongovernment agencies, then, that is expected to release the resources necessary for the coordinating activities of the LAP program.

At the same time, however, a clear articulation of the government's policy on literacy and awareness for adults and a concerted effort to redirect resources to the degree possible to promote such activities, is bound to attract the attention of external donors and to lead to some level of new funding. Indeed, a draft of the Literacy and Awareness proposal presented to last year's Australia UNESCO Advisory Meeting on proposed literacy activities for Melanesian led to their subsidizing some of the current 1990 activities.

It is also possible that the rising global support for public awareness campaigns on environment issues, drug trafficking and AIDs could wind up supporting literacy in countries with policies that link the two.

## 5.0 PRIVATIZATION

In fact, a matter currently before the National Literacy and Awareness Council in Papua New Guinea is how best to integrate the extensive landowner awareness program of the Tropical Forest Action Plan for Papua New Guinea (see Appendix E: Landowner Awareness Centre) with the rest of the national LAP program.

Given the restricted manpower and resources currently available to the Secretariat and the need to develop new models for fully integrating literacy with such awareness information, consideration is now being given to integrating the administration of the Landowner Awareness Centre with the coordinating work of the LAP Secretariat right from the beginning.

The TFAP program calls for the creation of a government owned agency registered under the Companies Act in an attempt to free it from slow moving bureaucratic machinery and to limit government involvement to policy decisions at the board level. And this initiative comes at a time when the national government has decided on trimming the public service as part of a massive US100m cut in national expenditure resulting from the untimely closure of the large Bougainville Copper Mine.

Papua New Guinea is among those countries looking for a means of containing government involvement in economic activities wherever possible and it is also calling for greater involvement by the private sector in its training programs, making any opportunity to share its burden in reaching its multilingual rural population with appropriate literacy and awareness programs most welcome indeed.

The question is how best to sustain the funding of such programs and at what level of involvement from each of the interested parties. The latest donor roundtable conferences on Tropical Forest Action Plans are marked by increased involvement of nongovernment organizations and reflect the development of a global concern for funding the preservation of world heritage reserves. Is this not yet another example of our diminishing national boundaries and growing sense of global responsibility?

Papua New Guinea has made a historical step forward with the endorsement of its National Literacy and Awareness Program and the establishment of its LAP Council and Secretariat. But the question of consistent financial support clouds its chances of success. Perhaps, then, its along the fringes of global awareness issues... issues that require access to information on the part of marginally literate landowners... that new formulas for funding literacy should be sought.

# Circular 37/88

Papua New Guinea
Department of Education
Waigani

Date: 24 November 1988.

File: CM2-4-2
SE2-1-3

SECRETARY'S CIRCULAR NO: 37/88

SUBJECT: VERNACULAR LITERACY PROGRAMME

The above programme has been funded for 1989.

The scope of this project will include:

- vernacular and lingua franca pre-school literacy
- transitional literacy in lower primary
- lingua franca language courses in secondary
- adult literacy

The following are the operational details for the programme's implementation.

The financial and management components of the project will remain with the Project Management Division with Mr Ketoma as Project Manager.

The Curriculum Development Division will assume all professional curriculum responsibilities such as the:

- development of national Language and Literacy policies,
- evaluation of existing curricula and materials,
- liaison with all participating agencies and groups in the development of suitable materials,
- liaison with SIL in all of the above.

These two divisions have, through the Education II and Education III projects, many years of experience is such co-operative ventures.

All professional curriculum literacy functions will be actioned through the English section of the Curriculum Unit . This section will be renamed the Language and Literacy section as proposed in the restructure currently being considered by DPM.

The proposed Literacy sub-committee of the SSM will, when set up, be chaired by the Assistant Secretary Curriculum with the Assistant Secretary Project Management and Project Manager as ex-officio members.

I am of the firm belief that these actions will ensure the most effective implementation of the aims of the PIP, the Philosophy and current government thinking.

J E TETAGA

Secretary for Education

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LITERACY AND AWARENESS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT & PROGRAMME DESIGN DOCUMENT

# INTRODUCTION

These documents are submitted in response to N.E.C. decision No. 89/88 of 7 November 1988 which directed that functional examples of RMS be prepared for inclusion in the 1990 budget.

RMS ensures that strategies are developed for the achievement of national objectives and that these strategies are realised in concrete, operational programmes and projects.

This present submission proposes for NEC consideration and approval:

1. The adoption of the following as a national objective:

   *"to help people understand the changes that are occurring in contemporary society".*

2. The endorsement of the Programme Specification Document "Literacy and Awareness" as a directive embodying Government's strategy for achieving this objective.

3. The endorsement for implementation in the 1990 Budget of the Programme Design Document for a "Literacy and Awareness Programme" based on this strategy.

This programme is the first to have been fully developed through RMS. In future, it is intended that Cabinet should give consideration and approval to each objective, and the strategy for its realisation, before programme design preparation commences. It is hoped that the value of presenting both strategy and programme design documents in one submission, as an exception on this occasion to make clear an example of what is intended, will be accepted.

It is the intention of the proposed procedure to ensure that policy direction and control is fully with the Government and that programme and project proposals stem directly from Government's policy directives. At the same time, the administration is contributing fully to support Government in the formulation and realisation of its policies.

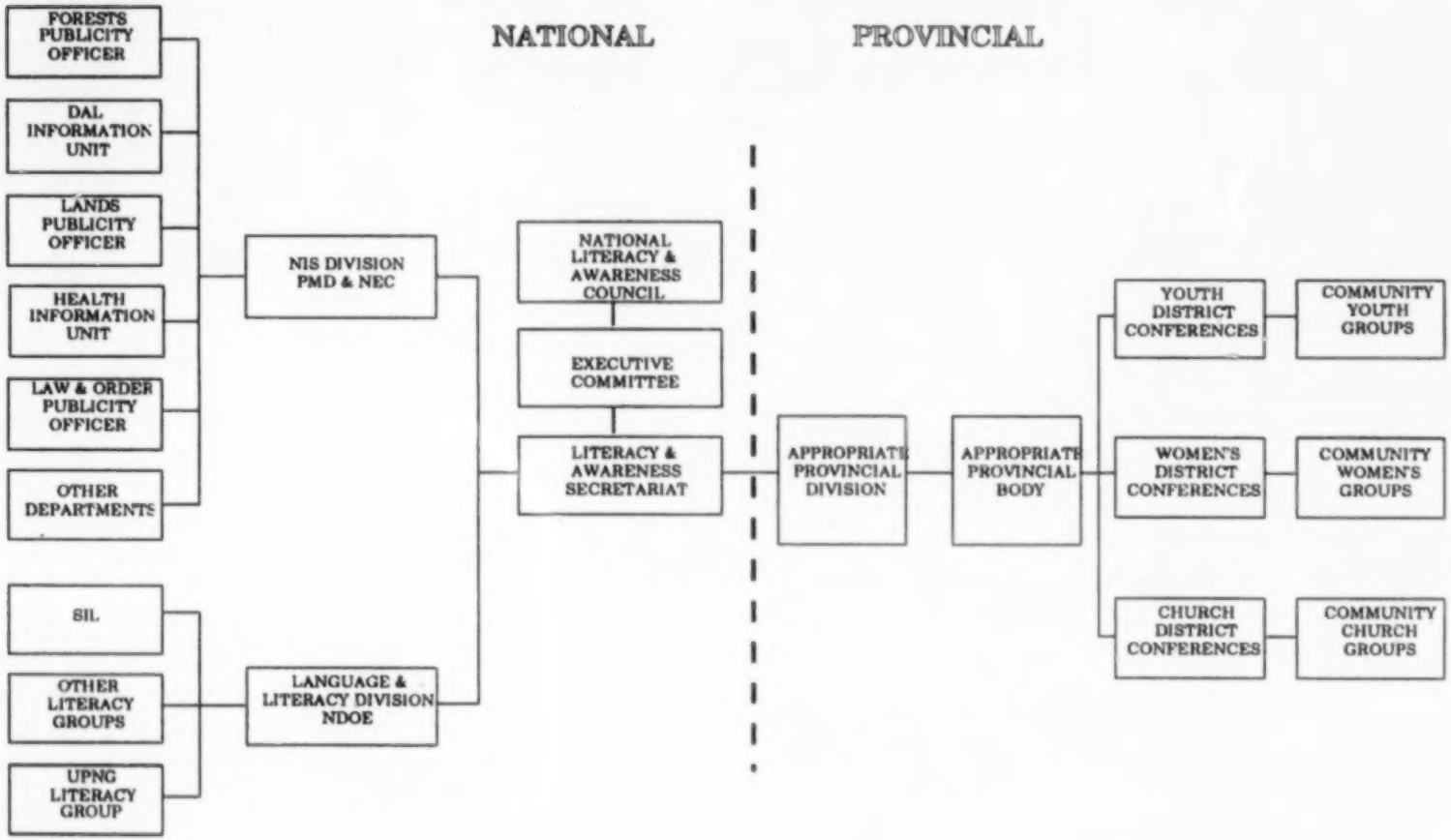
Departmental responsibilities for the realisation of Government's policies and objectives will become clearly defined in this process and accountability for their achievement will be maintained through the Annual Management Review and through the monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact.

It will be noted that the programme submitted secures an effective redirection of resources and purposive rationalisation of existing activities.

It will also be seen that an objective formulated in very general terms has been translated into concrete action and performance targets.

NEC endorsement for the continuation of this process is expected to bring all programmes under policy scrutiny and ensure that they all reflect Government policy. Government policy will be further reflected in the departmental Mission Statement Documents which, with the Programme Design Documents, provide the basis also for providing policy direction and maintaining departmental accountability.

b. **Management Structure**
The following diagram represents the proposed management structure for the programme.




APPENDIX C
LAP Management Structure

## The Melanesian Accord

*The Governments of the Independent States of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and the Republic of Vanuatu,*

*do hearby agree to commit themselves to the following principles in respect to the development of literacy and awareness:*

*(i) that the national governments have the responsibility for developing policy and for co-ordinating the effective use of internal and external resources*

*(ii) that an effective government to government communication structure will facilitate co-operation among the members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group and between them and potential donors to multi-country literacy and awareness activities.*

*(iii) that mulit-sectoral strategies and actions which are integral to overall development efforts are most likely to be effective.*

*(iv) the mobilisation of a wide range of partners involving families, teachers, communities, private enterprise (including those involved in information and communiucation), government and non-governmental organisations, institutions etc, in literacy and awareness activities*

*(v) the preferential targeting of the most disadvantaged groups such as women and out of school youth*

*(vi) that communication, the sharing of information and joint activities to support the national efforts to implement action plans for literacy and awareness are essential*

*(vii) that inter-country co-operation and donor support should appear in a true spirit of partnership in that they support the principles outlined in this accord.*

*On the understanding that other states which wish to subscribe to these agreed principles may do so, if all previous signatory agree, by having the authorised representatives sign below on their behalf.*

*Done at ..... , this .....day of .....in the year one thousand nine hundred and ninty.*

**JACK GENIA**
*Mimister for Education of Papua New Guinea*

**ALBERT LAORE**
*Minister for Education and Human Resource Development of Solomon Islands*

**SETI REGENVANU**
*Minister for Education of Vanuatu*

PROJECT 5

# Landowner Awareness Centre

## Rationale

In the absence of landowner commitment and support for concepts of sustainable management and conservation of the natural forest, attempts to ensure the productive and protective continuation of this resource are likely to meet with only sporadic success. Such commitment could be promoted by a combined approach involving education and the development of mechanisms to ensure adequate and continuous benefit to the landowner. Most importantly, provision for long term negotiation with the landowner must be made, as, under Melanesian customary practice, land transactions are not considered to be of a permanent or binding nature; indefeasibility is not recognized.

This project is among other things, a prerequisite to any attempt to map or delineate areas for potential World Heritage listings and will closely underpin the drafting instructions for forestry legislation by developing mechanisms to ensure appropriate landowner participation in the development of the forest resource. It proposes mechanisms to promote landowner's awareness and the skills to enable them to participate effectively rather than taking recourse in destructive redress. Key awareness topics to be addressed include:

- the need for general environment management at a national and local landowner level
- sustained yield management of forests for present and future generations and the need for and practical application of this policy and its consequences to landowners
- the need to protect important flora and fauna in Papua New Guinea as part of a national conservation strategy
- impacts of uncontrolled logging operations on the natural and social environment of the people
- the need to declare conservation areas in cooperation and agreement with landowners and the likely benefits to landowners for such cooperation
- explanations of concepts of conservation and landowner involvement re: national parks, wildlife management areas, sanctuaries, conservation areas and World Heritage declarations

## Project Outline

The project will establish a landowner centre under the Companies Act on a non-profit basis. A board comprising government, NGO, educational and landowner representation will be formed. The objective will be to set up a training and awareness information programme where mobile teams will be trained to carry out extension activities with landowners and awareness information will be distributed to local community groups for discussion purposes.

After the programme becomes operational, the centre will become self-sustaining by contracting awareness campaigns for various government and nongovernment bodies. The stiff budgetary constraints now being imposed due to the Bougainville crisis will limit the government's contribution to housing the coordination and materials production centre.

## NGO Participation

Along with strong NGO representation on the Board, existing NGO networks will be used to disseminate sets of awareness materials to community groups.